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**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method of purifying contaminated soil containing clay or silt by microorganisms, comprising

adding a gas phase rate increasing inorganic soil-improving material to contaminated soil, the gas phase rate increasing inorganic soil-improving material being water-absorbing, and having both non-swelling and non-viscosity properties after absorbing water in contaminated soil containing clay or silt, and then

mixing the soil by agitation, so as to cause the inorganic soil-improving material to absorb pore water contained in the clay or silt,

~~optionally~~ without aerating by introducing injected air,

while adding microbes to the contaminated soil that degrade the contaminants contained within the contaminated soil or utilizing degradation microbes already present in the contaminated soil, thereby microbially degrading the contaminants.

2. (previously presented) The method of purifying contaminated soil by microorganisms according to claim 1, wherein the degradation microbes are added to the contaminated soil while not being contained by the inorganic soil-improving material.

3. (cancelled)

4. (cancelled)